

# The Federal Flyer

## House Briefing Held on SHARE Proposal *House/Senate Leaders Seeking Original Co-Sponsors*

On March 20, more than 80 staffers from the U.S. House of Representatives attended a briefing on the proposed States' Highway Alliance for Real Equity (SHARE) legislation to improve the equity of the distributions of federal-aid highway program funds among the states. The two lead House sponsors, **Majority Leader Tom DeLay** (R-Texas) and **Congressman Baron Hill** (D-Indiana), expect to file the bill in the next few weeks.

The House briefing - led by DeLay and Hill staffers and SHARE members Texas DOT and Indiana DOT - provided House staffers with an opportunity to learn how the SHARE proposal would benefit their states. The SHARE proposal would expand the reach of the Minimum Guarantee provision to cover all of the federal highway program funds distributed to the states (including all formula apportionments and discretionary allocations) and to ensure a minimum rate of return from those funds of 95% on each state's share of payments to the Highway Trust Fund. Those in attendance were urged to have the Members of Congress they represent sign on as original co-sponsors of the SHARE legislation.

On the Senate side of Capitol Hill, the SHARE leaders provided a similar briefing for Senate staffers in February. **Senators George Voinovich** (R-Ohio) and **Carl Levin** (D-Michigan) have circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter seeking original co-sponsors for their introduction of the SHARE legislation in the Senate, which is also anticipated in the near future.

For more information on the SHARE proposal, check out the SHARE website: [www.sharestates.org](http://www.sharestates.org).



CREATING A BALANCE

## Bush Administration Launches Flight-100 *4-Year Reauthorization Bill Provides Flat Spending for Aviation Programs*

The Bush Administration last week released its proposal for the reauthorization of federal aviation programs. In commemoration of the centennial of the first flight by Orville and Wilber Wright at Kitty Hawk in 1903, the proposal is named **the Centennial of Flight Aviation Authorization Act (or Flight-100)**.

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Flight-100 would fund the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) each year at its current level of \$3.4 billion over the four-year term of the proposed bill. Slight increases would go to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) facilities and equipment programs, rising from \$2.9 billion in FY 2004 to \$3.1 billion by FY 2007. The proposal also includes \$100 million for safety research, engineering, and development in FY 2004.

On the policy side, the Administration proposes to restructure AIP formulas and set-asides to allow a transfer of more than \$87 million in FY 2004 funds from large to small airports, thereby raising small airports' share of total AIP funds from approximately 63 percent to more than 66 percent. The proposal also increase the amount of discretionary funding from 34 percent of the AIP program to 46 percent.



As a block grant state, the Texas Department of Transportation administers approximately \$26 million in annual federal AIP funds for improvements to the state's general aviation and reliever airports system. The FAA also provides funding directly to the large commercial airports in Texas for needed infrastructure.

## Budget Debate Features Transportation

### *Transportation Advocates Win Key Funding Battles for Reauthorization*

By a vote of 79-21, the United States Senate on March 21 agreed to language that would allow lawmakers to introduce a surface transportation bill authorizing \$255 billion for highways and \$56.5 billion for transit over the next six years. The language was a bipartisan amendment to the Senate Budget Resolution (S. Con. Res. 23). According to the **Bureau of National Affairs**, the language adds an additional \$50 billion for highways and \$10 billion for transit in budget allocations over six years. That is 28.9 percent above the budget resolution that included only \$206 billion for highways and \$44 billion for transit.

On the other side of the Capitol, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House Budget Committee agreed on language March 19 for the House Budget Resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) that allows money raised for the Highway Trust Fund on top of established levels to be spent on transportation projects. **T&I Committee Chairman Don Young** (R-Alaska) and **ranking member James Oberstar** (D-Minnesota) plan to introduce their TEA 21 reauthorization proposal totaling \$375 billion over six years. The effect of the agreement between Young and **House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle** (R-Iowa) is that if the transportation authorizers can raise the revenues for the trust fund, they will be allowed to spend them without facing a budget point of order.

The **Federal Flyer** is a publication of the TxDOT Legislative Affairs Office. It is intended to provide up-to-date information on major legislative activities in the 108th Congress for the management of the Texas Department of Transportation, state leaders, and others interested in Texas transportation issues. This report will also feature key activities in the national transportation community. Sources include news services and staff reports.

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